# The McGill Daily

February 1, 1999
Volume 88 Issue 44
smiling at the mirror since 1911


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DAVID SUZUKI


# McGill Students Fund: People are Talking

## PROPORSAL DRAWS PRAISE AND CRITICISM FROM ALL SIDES

BY REBECCA ROSENBLUM

In the two short weeks since Duncan Reid first proposed his McGill Students' Fund (MSF) idea, much discussion has ensued.

Two SSMU council meetings ago, Reid put forth a proposal in which students would pay a fee of $70 each semester into a mega-fund which would provide for library improvement, student union building improvement, faculty projects, academic projects, and bursaries.

After much discussion among the SSMU, the proposed fee has been cut from $70 to $38 per student per semester. And outside of the SSMU, students against the fund have mobilized to counteract the MSF-positive vibes coming from the SSMU.

For the SSMU executive, there seems to be almost unanimous positivity for - or at least acceptance of - the fund. The only things that remain to be decided are how much it will be, and what proportions of the money will go where.

The main topic of discussion during Thursday night's SSMU meeting was the division of how to allocate the new $38 fee, specifically Clubs, Services, and Publications representative's Tamana Kochar's fee division amendment. Her stated plan involved: $14 for library improvements, $12 for the Access Bursary Fund and $12 towards University Center improvements.

"The reason I propose this" Kochar stated, "is that I feel libraries should be the focus. The greater good... for the greater number of students." The amendment eventually passed and is the working structure for the time being, although there is still room to work within the "under $40" scheme that Reid is currently proposing.

Kochar said after the meeting that she only agreed insofar as "We shouldn't be asking students for $140, but the way they've broken it down to $38 is reasonable. We shouldn't be asking students for anything more than we already are."

However, Anna Kruzynski of the McGill Action Committee felt that fund is shifting the burden of the present fiscal situation onto students.

"The point is not the amount...it shifts the burden, even if it's $2...The government should be paying for this," said Kruzynski. "The issue is privatizing the university."

Erin Runions, also of that Committee, added "If it's not the responsibility of the government, it's not the responsibility of the community at large."

Graduate student Matt Bergbush offered a "disinterested opinion" (the Post Graduate Students Society is separate from the SSMU and thus grad students will not be asked to pay the fee) "I think it's an absolutely terrible idea. Every time students assume more of their education casts, it's likely that they'll have to assume even more... It creates a framework where the university can increase tuition".

Another wrinkle to this problem was pointed out by Runions: "I really think people need to realize that this is a move to deregulate tuition. It's illegal - there is a tuition freeze in Quebec."

But SSMU President Duncan Reid believes that the organization is making a pragmatic move in the MSF.

"I am not going to restate rhetoric that is supposed to be the domain of student union presidents. You have to have options.... In an ideal world, these are things we wouldn't have to pay for."

Reid denied the accusation of tuition raises. "These are student funds for student needs," he said.

In response to the criticism the proposed plan has been receiving in the campus media, Reid remained adamant, believing that most students are supportive of the idea.

"There's been a lot of skepticism in the media, but I don't think it's representative of the [body at large]."

The consensus on council is mostly one of approval. "We're showing the government that students have been forced to take matters into their own hands." says Jeff Feiner, VP External.

Bryan Chung, executive chairpersons of the PGSS, feels that this is message the government will be more than happy to hear. "It prevents the university from coming up with other solutions. The primary role of students is to learn...not [to] support what is basically...infrastructure".

"There is money [available to the university] - it's just a question of priorities" says Kruzynski, adding that one possible source is the interest on the McGill Endowment Fund. "You don't usually spend capital, but to reinvest almost all the interest is unacceptable when you have major cutbacks."

Despite increasingly visible antagonism towards the Fund, there is still a feeling on council that it will pass. "The reception [at SUS council] was generally favourable" said SUS rep Brock Macdonald. Arts rep Danielle Lanteigne added that "speaking for the Arts Faculty, support increased exponentially when [the fee] dropped below $40."

Even among it's detractors, there is the expectation that the outcome of a referendum on The McGill Student's Fund will be positive. "I think it will pass....many people don't turn out for elections." says Bergbush.

Runions could not hazard a guess as to the future, but remarked that "I think students are angered that the student government is selling them out."

Although no official survey mechanism is yet in place, public opinion's spectrum on this issue has mainly run from positive to uninformed. The anger of those students that do oppose it is caused, by the fact that, as Kruzynski states, "We should be focusing our energies on pressuring the government to invest in education." Instead, there is a feeling that the SSMU is, as Bergbush puts it, "just shoving fistfuls of money at a problem."

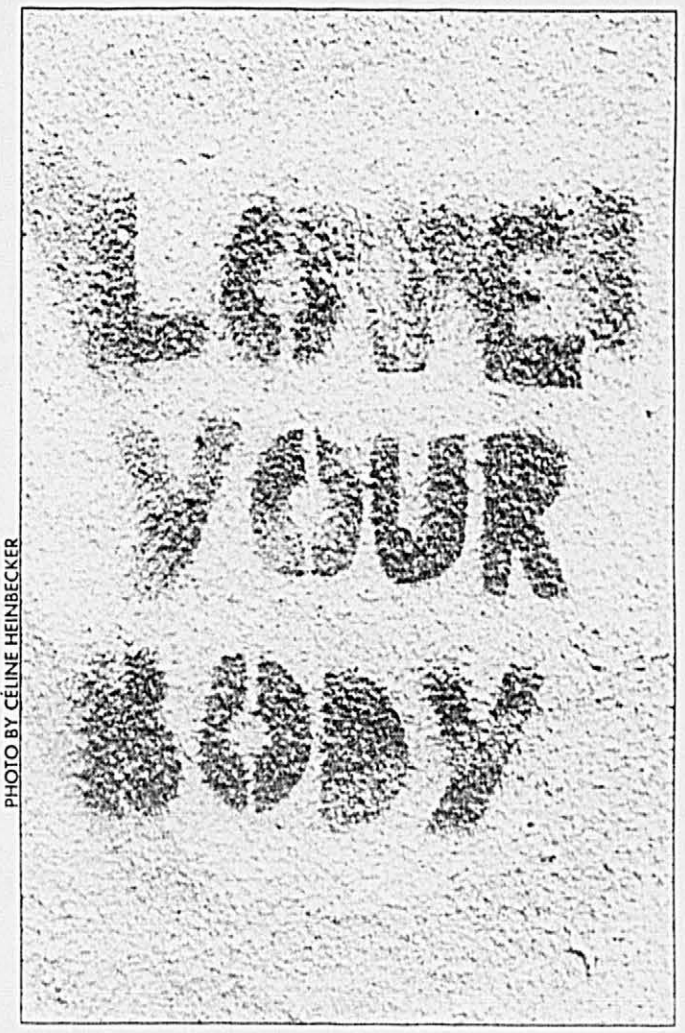



PHOTO BY CÉLINE HEINBECKER

Support Body Image and Eating Disorder Week, January 31-February 6

Peer Health Education is sponsoring several workshops and events for Body Image and Eating Disorder Awareness Week.

**Wednesday, February 3rd:**
A table promoting awareness and information about eating disorders and body image will be stationed in the lobby of Redpath Library between 11:30 AM -2:30 PM.

**Thursday, February 4th:**
Peer Health Education will be facilitating a Body Image Workshop at 6:30 PM, for women and men at Royal Victoria College in the West Lounge. All are welcome. For more information, contact Julie at 931-3206.

**Friday, February 5th:**
The front kiosk at the Shatner Building will be handing out information and promoting awareness about eating disorders and body image from 11 AM- 3 PM.

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**questions? contact verda cook by one of the means listed below**

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# Insane "Realism"

BY JEFF WEBBER

Democratic socialist George Orwell once said, "The enemy is the gramophone mind, whether or not one agrees with the record that is being played at the moment." The swelling leviathan of popular songs singing the sweet tune of fiscal constraint and unfettered capitalism, has caused too many tongues to sing along uncritically.

The idea isn't so much whether we agree or disagree with neoliberalism, it's that we haven't given it much thought. When authentic social democrats talk about the depletion of social infrastructure, the likes of Tony Blair and Bill Clinton yell back, "you're just not 'modern' enough." At the mention of modernity, and the onslaught of globalization, we're supposed to immediately submit to "realism," and reassess our values. We're supposed to do this before assessing the value of free market hysteria itself.

In this era of "globalization" there can be no promise of decreasing inequities. You're insane if you think that there should be international efforts to redistribute some of the vast wealth generated by new technologies in developed countries off the sweat of cheap, unregulated labour. This is the sort of "realism" engendered in the poetry of many economists. Perhaps, though, we should reexamine what's not a question of being reasonably "modern," but a question of denying the failings of our new world order.

In fact, it is not a "rational" move to ignore the collapse of the Asian tigers, the new mafia in Russia after its romantic swing to capitalism, the current financial chaos of Brazil, and the ever-increasing homeless, and poverty crises right here in Canada. Should the policies that led to these complex disasters be perpetuated without thoughtful analysis? Laissez-faire capitalism. What can it do for the environment? What can it do for the poor? What can it do for women? What can it do for ethnic minorities? What can it do for enslaved children of the garment industry? Very little.

The contradictory evidence of the acclaimed market does not lie only in the gross inequalities of the developing world. Its premise is questionable here at home. Let's turn to a truly Canadian example of the irrationality possible under the new ethic of deficit reduction, budget surpluses, and unregulated economics. Just last week a study by the Canadian Labour Congress illustrated that the percentage of unemployed covered by Unemployment Insurance in 1997 was less than half what it was in 1989. Specifically, this meant a decrease from 74 percent to 36 percent coverage. All in the name of the market, our federal Liberals have tightened eligibility rules, while the private sector has adopted a new rationale of part-time and contract workers, who are less likely to unionize, receive less benefits while working, and who inevitably find it harder to qualify for UI benefits once their positions have been downsized, or have outgrown their capacity to generate profit on the scale of cheap labour factories in any number of developing countries.

The UI system is expected to pay out $12.5-billion in benefits in 1999, and bring in $18.6-billion in revenue. The surplus of $6.1-billion will not go to unemployed workers, but diverted into other programs.

Meanwhile, Ottawa screams its support for the abolition of child poverty. Many of the children born to poverty, however, are the offspring of the unemployed who are now ineligible for UI in many cases. The two are not separate issues. Poverty in general means impoverished children. Is their case so convincing, that we abandon all skepticism and plunge onward to the promise of further inequity and injustice. How did we become so enamoured with the buzz words of elite media, the rhetoric of our government, and the numbers spewed forth from the mainstream economist?

I'm not convinced that the average person is devoid of respect for the well being of others. The dynamics of our global economy cannot be justifiably consumed with as little thought as a pop song. The victims of its cycle are too valuable. 24 hour sports channels, and CNN O.J. chases have perhaps created a mind more dangerous than the one Orwell spoke of years ago.

# E-trade and the Small Business

## Who Loses?

COMMENT

BY LOUIGI ADDARIO-BERRY

On CBC Montréal's morning show last Friday, host Dave Bronstetter spoke with Québec head of the RCMP's computer crimes division, regarding the arrest of a Grade School boy living in Montréal. The boy had, over the last three months, apparently broken into almost every major web site on the web, including those belonging to the US Government and Army web sites, major US and international banks, Wall Street, and other, unspecified sites. According to Bronstetter some of sites were as "far afield" as Norway.

We hear about this sort of incident on a regular basis; much of the time it is cases almost identical to this. Young Child Foils FBI Security. Yet the Internet expands at a pace unparalleled in any other sector of the economy. It seems indicative of a sort of mass hysteria regarding the 'net; should such activities occur in other sectors of similar size, it would wreak havoc on the economy. For instance, imagine what would happen if it was suddenly discovered that any grade-schooler could - with a bit skill and practice -break into ATM machines.

People seem to have an almost infinite tolerance for what would be unacceptable business practice in any other field. As my Computer Science professor, Prakash Panangaden, succinctly put it, after attending a week-long conference in the States, "add an 'e' to your company name and your value increases by 10 million dollars." All of the biggest web sites, even those directly aimed at making money, lose money, and lots of it. This is blatantly ignored by investors, who continue to pour money into these companies; pushing stock prices up, up, up.

A Globe and Mail article last Thursday included the following paragraphs:

Seattle-based Amazon.com reported Tuesday that its operating loss was $22.2-million or 14 cents in the fourth quarter, less than expected by analysts. With an additional $24.2-million in losses related to expanding the company, the quarter's total losses were $46.4-million or 30 cents.

But investors, looking at the Amazon.com's dominant position among Internet book, music and video sellers, ignored the losses and bought the company's stock, pushing it up $10.53 to end at $125.62 yesterday.

While these multimillion dollar corporations can afford to take gigantic losses on web-based commerce or trade, and continue

*(continued on page 4)*

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# Four Years for the Price of Five

BY BRYAN CHUNG

*The role of students is to learn...*
- Bernard Shapiro

Let me be the first to point out that this quote is completely out of context. My aim is to simply provoke a bit of thought. What is the role of the student at a university? Is it only to absorb the knowledge taught to him/her in classes? What about the role of university with respect to students?

Education clearly requires more than some magical transference of knowledge from professor to student. Learning cannot take place in an environment where students' first priority is their emotional and physical health, or their financial survival, or their living conditions. Our own university has committed to "maintain safe and suitable conditions of learning and study." (Charter of Student Rights, 1998). They have taken on the responsibility of providing to students services and facilities which are meant to create a permissive environment for learning. Yet, the operation budget of the University funds less than 10% of these student services. Is this what commitment means?

The University has repeatedly stated that the only solution to government cutbacks is for students to shoulder the burden. I agree with students when they say they are investing in their education and the quality of their




institution: that on some level, there exists an intangible debt from the student to the university for providing education. An education that they already pay for. But what is actually happening is that they have given both the University and the government an easy way out. No amount of lobbying or pressure will succeed if students continue to accept that there are "no solutions". By agreeing, they remove the pressure from the University and the government to find creative solutions.

Some students already pay up to $90.00 a year for the new Student Services building, the new Athletics facility and its use ($40.00 for the building, $20.00 for the Athletic Centre, $30.00 for the new Fitness Centre user fee). That's $360.00 a year over a four year degree. Tack on another $976.00 for student health, student counseling, disability services, career planning centre, athletics (yes, they're paying twice) and other important student services; and while you're at it, add $974.80 for what the University terms as "Miscellaneous charges." By the end of a four year degree, it's not just $360.00, but $2310.80 or about one year's tuition. The $2310.80 figure doesn't even include tuition, rent, food, or any other extra fees that students might be paying.

And that's only if the fees don't go up during the time of a degree.

This, because students are willing to swallow it. Because there are apparently "no solutions", and because school spirit is somehow linked to the amount of money students can contribute to offset the costs of operating the University.

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*(continued from page 3)*

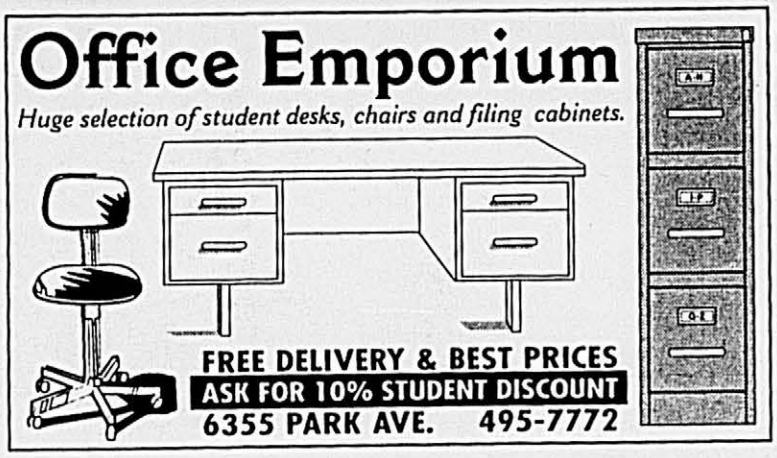
functioning, the same is not true of small to medium-size businesses, owned by modest groups or by individuals. In spite of this, due in large part to an ignorance of the way the web works, small businesses seem to view a "web presence" as an imperative if they are to stay competitive.

Small-business owners are not unaware of their bank balances, and can surely see that more money is spent on getting wired than is earned through online sales. The prevailing feelings on the issue, however, are similar to those generated by pyramid schemes: spend a little now, and in a while the money will come rolling in.

The analogy can be carried a little further. As with pyramid schemes, it's only a few who actually end up profiting off the whole deal. And as with most business, whether electronic or not, it's the big guy who ends up winning.

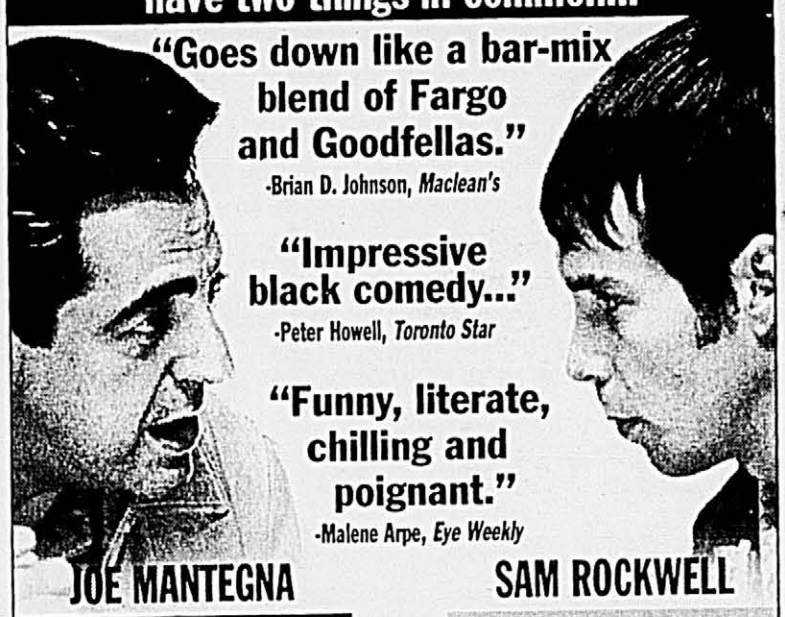
This is fairly apparent when the issue is thought through. Say every business, big and small, ends up on the net selling their products. The base of potential buyers is broader, but neither the total number of companies selling a given product, nor the total number of consumers has changed: just the medium of transaction. Meanwhile, IBM & Co. are getting rich selling servers, software and support to people who really can't afford it. And the people really profiting off the whole affair are the same ones who put the mom-and-pop shops out of business - corporations with vastly more money to spend on web site development and ad campaigns. It's *deja vu* all over again.

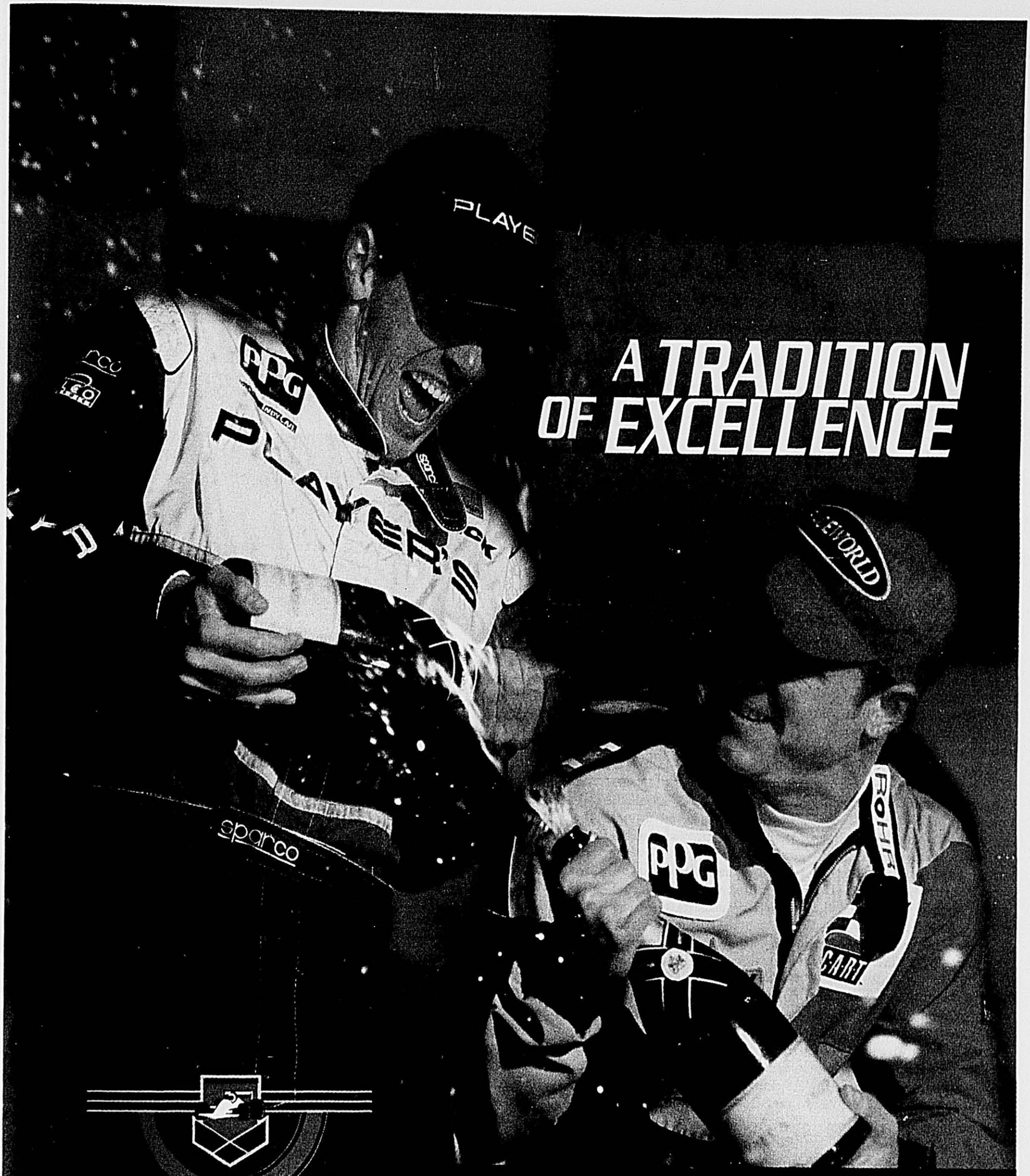
Online commerce will not serve as some great equalizer in the struggle of small business owners to remain solvent. If anything, it has the capacity to further the rich-get-richer, poor-get-poorer pattern we already see taking place through more traditional avenues. The only difference is that now Chapters doesn't have to build a franchise in Timmins, Ontario in order to put the local bookseller out of business.

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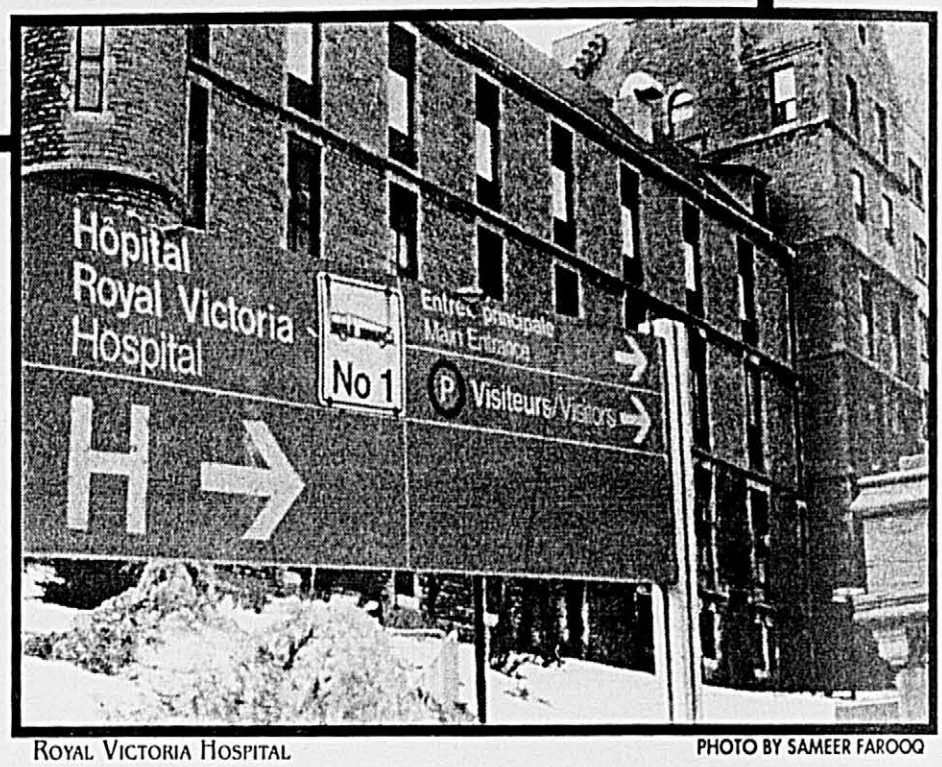
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# Superhospital Project Continues Undaunted

## Public meeting aims to garner needed support from community




ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL PHOTO BY SAMEER FAROOQ

BY BEN ERRETT

The superhospital project has been called every thing from a chance for excellence to a potential Olympic Stadium debacle, but until last Wednesday, the public's thoughts on the McGill University Health Centre's proposed move to a new site had not been officially heard by those in charge. It was then that the first annual public information meeting of the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) was held in the Jeanne Timmins Amphitheatre at the Montreal Neurological Hospital. The two hour conference marked the first time the MUHC committee has gone to the general public with its plans for the large health complex slated to open in 2004 on the Glen Yards site behind Vendôme metro station in Notre-Dame-de-Grace. The site is currently owned by Canadian Pacific Railway. The superhospital will replace the Montreal General Hospital, Royal Victoria Hospital (and affiliated Montreal Chest Hospital), Montreal Children's Hospital and Montreal Neurological Hospital, all of which are currently affiliated as the MUHC. Current estimates at the cost of the Health Centre peg the project at anywhere from 850 million to 1 billion dollars, of which 300 million is to come from the Quebec government, 200 million from the federal government (directed towards research) and the rest from private donations.

At first, the superhospital project seemed like a godsend for Montreal's dwindling English community— a giant complex with state-of-the-art equipment, metro and commuter train links, and consolidated resources. However, the project has met with vocal opposition from some members of the community, and the lack of a response from the MUHC's organizers to concerns have only made matters worse. In a series of polls that headlined *The Gazette* and numerous letters on the editorial page, the proposed superhospital was confronted with the fact that many people did not see why there was a need for a new health complex. Gazette Columnist Henry Aubin asked why, if this was such a wonderful idea, hasn't the community been kept better informed?

H. Arnold Steinberg, chairman of the MUHC, and other committee members clearly understood the need to get their critics onside at the meeting. All of the meeting's speakers stressed the pressing need for the superhospital, and repeated examples were given to reinforce this point.

"It would be much more expensive to upgrade [the current] facilities and much less effective than to move to a new site. We don't find it at all unusual that Northern Telecom, for example, has abandoned its multistory manufacturing facilities, all built later than our hospitals, in favour of new high-tech plants in order to maintain their edge in the world of telecommunications" said Steinberg in one of the afternoon's many media-ready speeches. It was also apparent that the organizers knew their audience, referring numerous times to the difficulty many of the seniors present had climbing University Street to the Neuro.

Critics, including current McGill Vice-Principal (Development and Alumni Relations) Derek Drummond, have expressed concern at the cost to the urban fabric that would be incurred upon closing four central hospitals. Steinberg turned this common argument against the superhospital around as he referred to an accident on University Street that obstructed access to the Royal Victoria Hospital emergency entrance for two hours.

"Imagine if there had been a fire at that time!" he said, startling some older members of the audience and drawing gasps from others.

More often than not, the tone of Wednesday's meeting had the organizers on the defensive, repeatedly pointing out the advantages to the Glen Yards site and doing damage control on controversial components of the project. The reasons given for the move ranged from technological to aesthetic. Health Centre Surgical Services Director Dr. Jonathan Meakins stressed the demand for bigger operating rooms to hold modern perfusion and diagnostic equipment for open-heart surgery, while Nancy Wright, a MUHC Director and Friends of the Neuro volunteer group member, spoke enthusiastically of the panaromic views of Mount Royal and the South Shore afforded by the new location.

The fact that this project has reached this point is a testament to the dedication and work of those involved. But at a stage where the site purchase will be complete by the end of the year and building will begin soon after, why is there still so much controversy? Architects, doctors, patients and employees at the hospitals have expressed their distaste at the committee's plans on numerous occasions, but it would seem that their concerns have not been adequately dealt with by the MUHC. Prior to this meeting, the MUHC appeared to ignore its critics, making no public announcements regarding their




PHOTO BY SAMEER FAROOQ ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL

**"Our process at all times has been consultative, transparent, inclusive, and accountable." -MUHC brochure**

**"But within the wider community, there has been no consultation. That's why we see the type of ambivalence that polls show. In terms of consultation, it is reminiscent of the Big O, and look how that turned out." -Dr. James Farquhar**

complaints. Some of these concerns were addressed in the question period allotted at the close of the public meeting.

"The bed number of the existing hospitals is approximately 1300, and yet the aim [at the Glen Yards site] is approximately half this number. We already have in place many of the features of short-stay surgery, and I wonder how much more we can cut the stay," said Dr. Alan Gold. This question was expected by the committee, as they had an answer ready. Dr. Meakins said that the use of minimally invasive techniques in surgeries will allow the same procedures to be done with less of a need for beds. As an example, he quoted an average cardiac surgery length of stay of 10 days now, which would be reduced to four to six days in the next seven years. He stated that mantra in surgical circles was that "We don't need beds; we need time to do the work."

Dr. Meakins' examples are certainly valid, as most major Canadian hospitals have a length of stay of around six days for cardiac surgery. However, the cases that bring this average up are those that require hospitalization for periods of three months or more. The intensive care beds necessary to accommodate these patients must be present in a superhospital, as this would be the centre of care for the whole West Island.

The teaching of McGill medical students was also a concern to Dr. Gold, as he asked how the superhospital would be able to teach primary care (general diagnosis and procedures carried out in a doctor's office) when the focus seemed to be on tertiary care (major surgeries and large-scale operations).

In response, McGill's Dean of Medicine Dr. Abraham Fuks said "Our hospitals today provide a mixture of tertiary, secondary and primary care, and the issue is not simply do we continue to provide primary care, but in what locus." Dr. Fuks went on to say that most medical care is ambulatory, and that the change in the hospital infrastructure would provide a better model for modern care.

**Consultation with Workers Said to be Lacking**

The MUHC trumpets their inclusiveness in a glossy report distributed at the general meeting. The brochure states that "Our process at all times has been consultative, transparent, inclusive, and accountable." Dominic Nelson, president of the Montreal General Hospital workers union and vocal critic of the MUHC administration, expressed his concerns in a question to Dr. Hugh Scott, executive director of the MUHC.

"What exactly did you mean by your recent statement that 'our support service unions are key stakeholders in this project?'" asked Nelson, citing an article in the MUHC Bulletin that stated that the support service unions had been consulted. "Does this mean that they had been and are involved in the planning process, or does this mean that they will be informed when the process is over and decisions have been made? How can these key stakeholders support this project when the process seems to leave them out in the cold?"

In response, Dr. Scott slickly brushed off the accusation and said, "You, of course as an individual are one of the important people that we will want to consult because you are a leader of one of our most important unions." He went on to say, "I guess today is part of that invitation, and I look forward to some very profitable discussions ... with you and other leaders of our support staff. I remain confident, as I'm sure you are, that this will be a very productive, mutually supportive exercise."

Afterwards, Nelson told the Daily that he was concerned that the MUHC was placing an overbearing workload on its employees during the transition, and he said that the individuals that were consulted were not consolation for the fact that unions have thus far not been part of the process.

Similar concerns about consultation have been voiced by other members of the community. Dr. James Farquhar, a psychiatrist now at The Douglas Hospital, has been watching this project since its incipient stages.

"The consultation process has been partly excellent and partly lacking. In the McGill community, the consultation has been top notch. There has been an outstanding amount of networking within that relatively small organization. But within the wider community, there has been no consultation. That's why we see the type of ambivalence that polls show. In terms of consultation, it is reminiscent of the Big O, and look how that turned out."

**The Fate of the Buildings**

One of the more controversial components of the plan for the superhospital, as reported by the Daily last November, is the proposed use of the buildings. Arnold Steinberg made a point of stressing that the possibility of converting the facilities, particularly the Royal Vic, to luxury condominiums was only a tentative proposal. Other uses of the buildings were not fully examined in previous reports. Steinberg said that these uses included institutional rather than residential or commercial occupation, and some possibilities were biomedical companies, training colleges, or locations for international head offices.

Steinberg's mention of the fact that there is no definite plan for luxury condominiums is largely due to the efforts of Architecture professor Annemarie Adams. Her speech to the James McGill Society entitled Modernism and Medicine: The Architectural Past and Future of Montreal's Royal Victoria Hospital was printed in The Gazette in its entirety and took issue with the MUHC's dismissal of the Royal Victoria Hospital as too old to be used any longer. She has been studying the RVH since 1993 and is widely considered to be an expert on the building. She has been particularly adamant that plans to demolish more modern parts of the RVH

In her speech, Adams said that one example of the MUHC's overexuberance to destroy the old buildings was particularly worrying given the current emphasis on how decrepit the current facilities are.

"Think about recent additions to the Royal Vic, like the Centennial Pavilion which officially opened in September 1993. It was 16 years in the planning, cost about $25 million...and it might be reduced to rubble within a few years." Adams could not be reached for further comment.

**The Future**

For now, the MUHC plans are definite, with the Health Centre scheduled to open in 2004. However, no ground-breaking will commence until the end of this year, meaning that plans could still be scaled down. The MUHC report proclaims that we are "at the point of no return." Dr. Farquhar is not so sure.

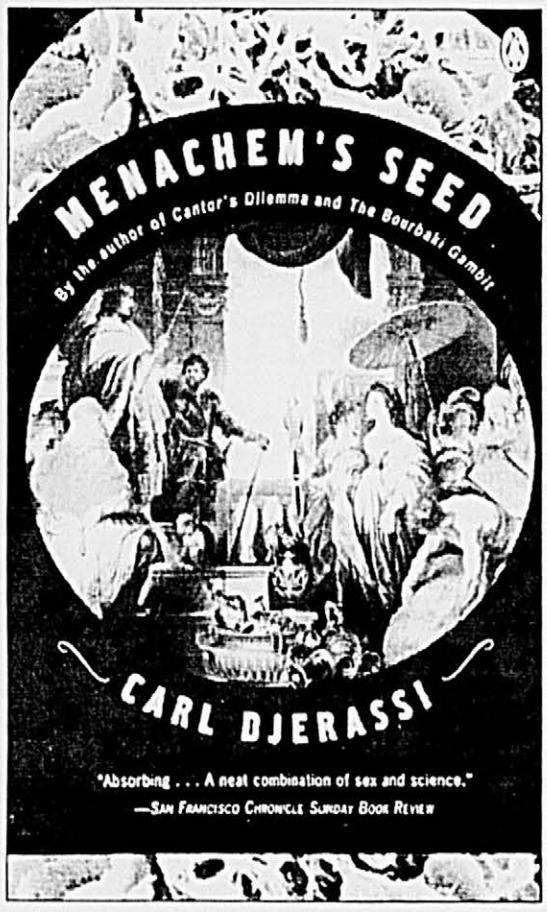
"My prediction is that the $200 million [in research funds slated to come from the federal government] will at some point be questioned. Then you'll see a challenge facing the organizers. I think we'll see the plans scaled down to keep using one of the present facilities in addition to a new smaller building. I think Nichols Steinmetz [Associate Executive Director of the MUHC] has done an excellent job , so I am confident the results will be good. I think we won't see a superhospital, but rather a merger that improves patient care."

# Now You're Speaking My Language

## Carl Djerassi brings science to literature

BY KIM DE SIMONE

One day in the lab, scientist Carl Djerassi switched his research subject. Looking around him, he saw something even more fascinating. He put the microscope on his collegues.




He has since made a career in describing and analysing scientific culture.

"Humans are story telling creatures" explained the Standford University chemistry professor to around 100 people at Tuesday night's lecture entitled "Science-in-Fiction is not Science Fiction". He has received 17 honourary doctorate degrees and numerous prestiguous awards. He has also managed a professional cross over, earning fame with 5 published novels.

According to Djerassi the general public is not solely responsable for finding themselves in the scientific dark.

"Scientists don't make huge efforts in communicating with the public," admitted the speaker. "They are rather egocentric."

He described the tribal culture of scientists as one of 'intellectual osmosis.', where researchers are more interested in showing results than processes.

Two themes are inherent in all of his novels. He writes about what he calls "noble science and noble lust" which demonstrates the competitive ambition of scientists. He also sees the scientific field as profoundly male-dominated.

Djerassi explores the changes that are occuring in the scientific world as women begin to play more prominent roles as well as the challenges they are faced with.

"Trust is indispensable," he said. Trust among scientists is especially important because a retraction of scientific findings is usually very damaging to scientists.

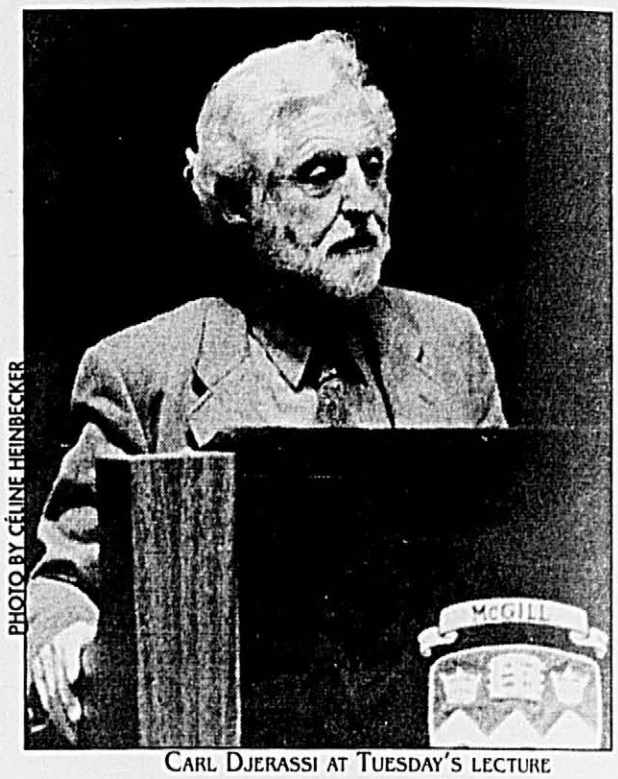


PHOTO BY CÉLINE HEINBECKER
CARL DJERASSI AT TUESDAY'S LECTURE

"The worst statement a scientist can make is not to trust a colleague," he said. Scientists are believers in the scientific method as well as "infallible" human beings. The scientific community lives off of trust; a scientist must be keenly aware of the bulk of work preceding him/her in the relevant field.

Djerassi remarked that science is a "contact sport for nerds" and that competition is inherent in scientific research but internal cooperation is also a key component of scientific activity.

The benefits of a scientist versed in the literary world seemed clear at the close of Djerassi's lecture, if only to provide science a certain accessibility. "Scientists," he said "should not eliminate the outside world."

# Building Foundations

## Students start Habitat For Humanity chapter at McGill

BY YAEL FRIEDMAN

"Five houses in five days."

This ambitious project in St. John's, Newfoundland indirectly led to the formation of a Habitat for Humanity chapter here at McGill, the first organization of its kind in Québec.

After the endeavor two summers ago in Newfoundland, McGill Architecture student Sherry Poon decided to take the ideas espoused by Habitat for Humanity a step further and helped establish a campus chapter.

"It was amazing to see so many people working together for one cause," said Poon. "I thought it was necessary to bring it to Montréal."

The mandate of the organization is to help provide quality shelter for the poor.

"Our key goal is to eliminate poverty housing," explained Poon.

Within the next few weeks the students involved in Habitat will be finishing up the renovation of the Montreal Diet Dispensary (MDD).

The MDD is a centre that counsels and distributes food to undernourished pregnant women so they can healthily bear their children.

The MDD renovation project was not a traditional Habitat undertaking but according to Raefer Wallis, one of the group leaders in the project, the renovation certainly embodies the spirit of what Habitat for Humanity stands for. Wallis sees this renovation as intrinsically important because of its grassroots status.

"[This is a] local effort ... pushing for change at the local level, at the home. Bringing a group of people together and working together on something actual," said Wallis.

The MDD project was provided for by various sources including Reno Depot (supplying $800 worth of material), donations from the One O'clock Club in Westmount, money raised by McGill Habitat members, and by the MDD itself.

As many of the participants in the group are architecture students, Wallis points out the satisfaction of seeing the theoretical work of the classroom put in practice.

"[We are] finally getting to push designs off to completion," said Wallis.

Although the club was founded by Architecture students and at the beginning mainly consisted of them, it is now comprised of students from almost every faculty and has even sparked the interest of people outside of McGill.

At its foundation, Habitat for Humanity is grounded in Christian ideals that led farmer and biblical scholar Clarence Jordan in 1942 to establish a farm near Americus, Georgia where him and his wife could "begin a new life of Christian service." At this farm Jordan developed the idea of "partnership housing", "where those in need of adequate shelter would work side by side with volunteers to build simple, decent houses."

One person to whom this concept greatly appealed was former U.S. President Jimmy Carter. His trip in 1984 to New York City (The Jimmy Carter Work Project) sparked an increased national (and eventually international) interest in the projects and idealism of Habitat for Humanity. Carter's involvement has helped propel Habitat to where it is today in the States and abroad. There are now several affiliates in Canada, the first one having been established ten years ago in Waterloo, Ontario.

Reaching Québec has taken longer but finally arrived here a little over a year ago when a Montréal chapter and a McGill chapter was established. Although the two groups are formally affiliated, McGill's Habitat has been independent in finding projects and acquiring funds.


PHOTO BY YAEL FRIEDMAN
PROJECT LEADER RAETER WALLIS

# Wage gap still significant at Canada's universities

BY QUADE HERMANN

TORONTO (CUP) - The situation for women faculty teaching at Canadian universities has improved in the last 40 years but there's still a long way to go, a recent study indicates.

Although the wage gap between male and female faculty has narrowed, the inequities are still considerable, the study suggests.

"The status of women has improved, but remains inferior to men," said Michael Ornstein, a professor York University's Schulich School of Business and a co-author of the study.

The study, which analyzed Statistics Canada data gathered by universities between 1957 and 1994, found the average pay of female faculty went from $5,600 in 1957 to $63,200 in 1994. The average pay for male faculty increased from $7,000 to $74,500.

That meant the wage gap between men and women teaching at Canadian universities closed considerably, from 23.5 per cent in 1957 to 8.1 per cent in 1994.

But even with this advance, the study estimates that in 1994 it would have cost $49 million to correct pay inequities across the country.

Among the study's other major findings:

- Over the last four decades, the number of full-time female faculty members across Canada increased from less than 5,000 to more than 36,000.

- The largest increase in women faculty was in the humanities, rising from10.3 per cent to 28.7 per cent.

- In engineering and the applied sciences, female faculty increased from 1.1 per cent to 5.4 per cent, a significant relative progress that is nevertheless shadowed by "a large degree of continuing male domination."

- There has been virtually no progress in increasing the number of female faculty in agriculture and the biological sciences.

At York University, the wage gap between male and female faculty is easy to see.

Each year, the university posts the names and salaries of staff who earn$100,000 or more.

Of the 81 names on the list in 1997, 13 were women. Five of those were ranked professor or associate professor and the rest held administrative posts. By contrast, 44 male professors or associate professors were on the list.

But change is coming, says Henry Mandelbaum, executive director of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations.

Just as the pool of qualified women increased in the '60s and '70s, the hiring binge of the same decades ceased, he says. As men who were hired during those decades retire, women will have more positions to apply for.

"It will provide opportunity for young women to be hired," he said.

Last week, York and the University of Toronto announced they plan to hire between 250 and 500 new faculty in the next few years.

The study, released last month, is believed to be the first systematic examination of the impact of gender on the situation of female faculty in Canadian universities.

Ornstein says he and co-authors Penni Stewart, of York University, and Janice Drakich, of the University of Windsor, wanted to supplement the existing research on the experiences of female faculty in Canada.


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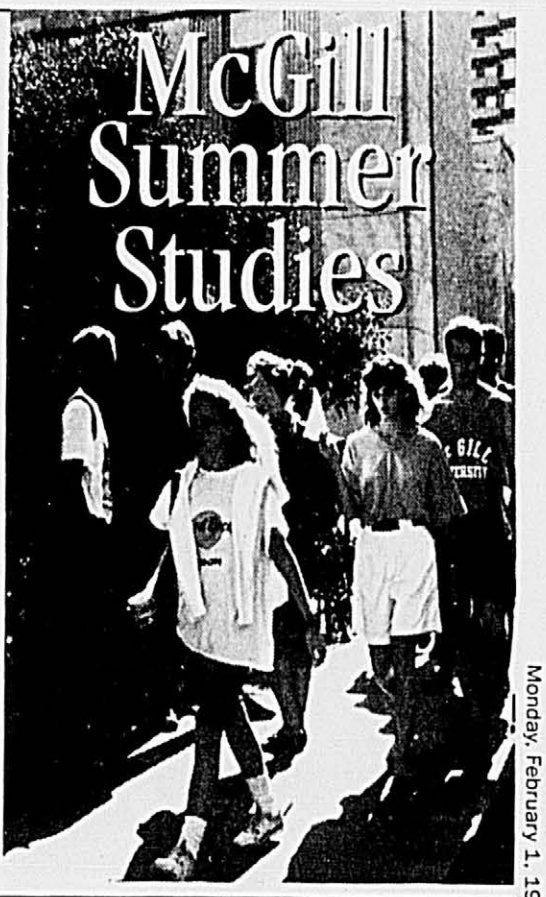
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Candidates will be announced between February 10 and February 16.

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# Suzuki joins Ontario anti-smog campaign

BY TRACY TATKA

TORONTO (CUP) - David Suzuki has joined forces with the Toronto Environmental Alliance and the Sierra Club of Canada to try to persuade incoming provincial candidates to reduce air pollution.

In response to the 1,800 premature deaths attributed to smog in Ontario last year, the team of environmental heavy weights launched their campaign last week.

The group is calling for a 75 per cent reduction of sulfur dioxide from the air, a 6,000-tonne cap on emissions from nitrogen oxides and a virtual elimination of mercury emissions by 2005.

To bolster its campaign efforts, the group has also issued a non-partisan challenge to make a reality what has been promised in the past: clean air.

The coalition doesn't blame past governments for the current state of air quality. Instead, it plans to target incoming candidates to make them responsible.

"It's hard to hit the invisible boxer in the ring," said Lois Corbett, executive director with the Toronto Environmental Alliance.

The group's ultimate aim is to ensure that whoever wins the next provincial election will be held accountable to better air quality standards.

Increasing those standards is essential to improving the health of Ontarions, the group says.

According to the Ontario Medical Association, smog-filled air, especially on hot and sunny days, contributes to an increased risk of illness, asthma attacks and cardiorespiratory problems.

The association notes medical problems such as these have already cost the province $11 billion in health care costs to date.

And Ontario spends about $1 billion a year on respiratory health care costs, including smog-inflicted asthma, the association says.

Corbett says pollution-related medical problems are a crisis.

"(It's) a provincial tragedy and one that those running for office must address," Corbett said.

Suzuki, a world-leading ecologist, says Ontario can significantly improve its air-quality by taking into account the coalition's recommendations.

"This is an opportunity for Ontario to lead Canada in emissions reductions and move towards a cleaner, healthier future," he said.

"You don't mess with air because it's so fundamental," warned Suzuki. "It keeps us alive."

Relying on public support and pressure, the coalition will try to persuade the provincial government to take action and help erase past mistakes.

"We had a similar demand, across society, to move on acid rain in the 1980s," said Elizabeth May, director of the Sierra Club Canada.

The group doesn't plan to support any one candidate in the provincial election, which is expected to be called this spring.

Instead, they have chosen to publish each candidate's stance on air-pollution, including what his or her plans are to reduce it, leaving the voter to decide who has the best proposal.

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by pierre alain parfond

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# $190 SAVINGS

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## GLASSES

GET $150 OFF PURCHASE OF PRESCRIPTION GLASSES WITH YOUR MCGILL HEALTH PLAN ONLY AT:

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## DR. F. MAROUN, OD

EXAMPLE OF SAVINGS:
I. EYE EXAM = $40
II. Rx GLASSES WITH SCRATCH RESISTANT LENSES = $265
YOUR DISCOUNT WITH US = $190
YOUR COST FOR BOTH = $115
YOUR GUARANTEE = 2 YEARS

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